

President's Corner We're for the Birds!

by Marcia Balestri

Did you know that the American Birding Association (ABA) started out with no conservation goal or education program? No Birders' Exchange or youth programs? (Don't worry, this isn't a plug to join ABA [although if you are not a member, check it out!], or a hackneyed argument for or against listing.)

Just after I had signed up with ABA, I had the occasion to ask one of the early ABA members just how the organization came about. He indicated that it started as a resource for listers. According to Claudia Wilds in a 1994 article for *Birding* magazine, Jim Tucker, who started the original ABA magazine, "conceived a journal and an organization focused entirely on birding for fun, partly for its own sake, as a way for birders all over the continent to connect with each other, and partly as a subtle but inevitable lure to get more people involved in the conservation movement."

The ABA founders reached an early consensus that ABA would devote itself to promoting the hobby and sport of birding and would leave scientific contributions

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The Maryland Yellowthroat

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Birds of Note—by Les Roslund

- We have all heard the admonition to "bird every bird," but many of us let some birds slip by. Fortunately, Sean McCandless and Parke John thoroughly examined the flock of peeps on Skimmer Island in Ocean City on August 4. They were rewarded with a RED-NECKED STINT! This Asian species was still carrying some of the breeding plumage, so Sean said it actually did stand out like a sore thumb amongst its closest neighbors. If accepted, this will be only the second record of this species in Maryland. The bird stayed just a few hours, but that was long enough for it to be seen by at least two other Maryland birders.
- Another delightful find was recorded by Dave Czaplak, who alerted fellow birders to Maryland's first-ever SAY'S PHOEBE on September 2. This bird was flycatching in a field along Hughes Road in Montgomery County, slightly north of the entrance to Hughes Hollow. The SAY'S PHOEBE stayed around for two days, treating numerous birders to excellent views and giving photographers a beautiful subject.
- Frank Hawkins of DC, cited as a rookie Brit by his friend Gary Allport, happened to look up just in time to see a soaring ANHINGA from his house near Fletcher's Boathouse in DC on September 17. This bird appeared to rise up from the Potomac River; it then circled up to a fairly high altitude before drifting away towards the south. Gary gets credit for drawing Frank's attention to the fact that an ANHINGA sighting is quite unusual in DC as well as in Maryland.
- WHIMBRELS show up fairly reliably each year along Maryland's Atlantic coast. However, this year at least one of these birds decided to spend some time quite far from the ocean. On September 14, Bud Taylor reported several sightings of a lone WHIMBREL foraging along Beverly Beach and Mayo Beach in Anne Arundel County. This bird had been there since at least September 12 and continued until at least September 18; after several days' absence, it was seen again Sept 26. On September 20, Tyler Bell found a WHIMBREL at Point Lookout State Park, St. Mary's Co; the bird was seen again on September 22 during a morning birdwalk. In the late afternoon of September 22, a WHIMBREL was spotted by Frode Jacobsen, Bill Hubick, and Dan Haas on the other side of the bay, at the Central Sod Farms in Queen Anne's County. Possibly these various sightings have been of the same bird. If so, this particular WHIMBREL certainly



Say's Phoebe photographed by Bill Hubick on September 2, 2007.

(Birds of Note continues on page 2)

BIRDS OF NOTE (continued from page 1)

was successful in entertaining many birders of our region.

- To the delight of Maryland birders, our region seems to be inundated with RED-BREASTED NUTHATCHES this fall; reports have been pouring in from throughout the state. Their arrival was not unexpected, after reports of a very poor 2007 mast crop in their nesting habitat. Some credit should be given to Danny Bystrak of Anne Arundel County. It was his July 3 report of a RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH at Jug Bay Wetland Center that got it all started. His second sighting of the season was in the back yard of his home on July 6. By some very strange coincidence, back in 1999 his first RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH sighting of the season was at his home on July 3 followed by a second sighting at Jug Bay on July 6.



DNR Reports by Glenn Therres: Black Rails Are Vanishing

The Black Rail is a species that most birders would love to see, though most have not. In Maryland, the tidal marshes of Dorchester County have traditionally been one of the best spots in the country to find this secretive, nocturnal bird (along with tidal marshes in southern New Jersey, coastal North Carolina, and the St. Johns River area of Florida). Many birders' life Black Rail came from the marshes along Elliot Island Road. Unfortunately, times have changed.

Black Rail numbers have declined significantly in the past 15 years in Maryland, so much so that we recently declared the Black Rail an endangered species under the authority of Maryland's Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act. The reasons for this relatively recent decline are unclear, though likely they are numerous and not yet well studied.

In 2007, DNR organized surveys specifically for Black Rails; these surveys were conducted by trained and experienced folks, including Hal Wierenga, during optimum times and using tape playbacks. *We found only 14 individuals from 134 survey locations*, most in Dorchester County. This represents a 70 percent reduction in the breeding population since these locations were surveyed in the early 1990s.

In the early 1990s, we documented Black Rails in 40 Atlas blocks during a three-year study. The recent Atlas project documented the species in 12 blocks. Informal roadside monitoring of the Fishing Bay marshes by various birdwatchers found as many as 30-47 individuals on single nights in the early 1990s, but only 0-3 birds have been heard there on single nights since 2000.

The problem is not confined to Maryland. The species is considered imperiled or critically imperiled in every state where it occurs except North Carolina. It is listed as threatened or endangered by every state in the northeastern United States and in many other states throughout its range. The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service lists the Black Rail as a Bird of Conservation Concern nationally.

Much of the decline in the Black Rail population throughout its range was originally believed to be due to habitat loss from ditching, draining, and alteration of emergent wetlands. However, that does not explain the recent declines in Maryland, where tidal marshes have received protection from major human alterations for many decades now. That is not to say that our tidal marshes have not changed over time. Sea-level rise and marsh subsidence are ongoing and likely have some impact on Black Rails and their breeding success. Other possible factors include mosquito control practices, marsh-burning practices, groundwater withdrawal in the surrounding uplands, and pathogens such as West Nile Virus. Predation from an increased Barn Owl population as a result of nest boxes we put out on some of these tidal marshes may have contributed, though owl pellet analysis suggests probably not.

The good news is that between the state and federal governments, we own a lot of tidal marsh in Maryland. However, we need answers to the question of why our Black Rail population has declined, if we are to preserve the species on these lands and elsewhere.

The Maryland Yellowthroat Newsletter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, Inc.

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Anyone is welcome to contribute articles or ideas that would be of interest to other birders. Copy may be mailed or e-mailed to Lydia Schindler by November 20, 2007 for the January/February 2008 issue.

*Illustrations pages 1, 8, 12, and 13
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Photograph page 1 © Bill Hubick.*

MINUTES OF THE MOS BOARD MEETING

JUNE 2, 2007

President: Marcia Balestri
Vice-President: Wayne Bell
Treasurer: *not present*
Secretary: Janet Shields
Past President: Janet Millenson

Atlas: Jane Coskren
Birding Trail: Marcia Watson
Conference: Janet Shields
Conservation: Maureen Harvey
Investments: Martha Waugh
Membership: Sarel Cousins
Sanctuary: Brent Byers
Scholarship: Tom Strikwerda
Statewide Education Activities:
 Mike Bowen

Allegany: *not represented*
Anne Arundel: Linda Baker,
 Susan Zevin
Baltimore: Brent Byers, Dave Curson,
 Roberta Ross, Taylor McLean
Caroline: *not represented*
Carroll: Bill Ellis, Maureen Harvey,
 Bob Ringle, Tammy Schwaab
Cecil: Marcia Watson
Frederick: Sarel Cousins,
 Helen Horrocks, Michael Welch
Harford: Thomas Congersky,
 Randy Robertson
Howard: Mary-Jo Betts,
 Jane Coskren, Shiras Guion,
 Tom Strikwerda, Kate Tufts,
 Martha Waugh, Paul Zucker
Kent: Walter Ellison, Nancy Martin
Montgomery: Michael Bowen,
 David Gray, Judy McCartney,
 Helen Patton, Lydia Schindler
Patuxent: Fred Fallon
Talbot: Wayne Bell
Tri-County: *not represented*
Washington: Shirley Ford,
 Anna Hutzell, Ann Mitchell

President Marcia Balestri called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. and thanked the Carroll Bird Club for hosting the meeting at Piney Run Park in Sykesville.

Minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

Treasurer's Report: Emmalyn Holdridge's quarterly Treasurer's Report was submitted.

CHAPTER REPORTS

None

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Sanctuary: Brent Byers reported that eight people attended the Irish Grove workday. The house was cleaned and trail work done and area cleared. A contractor came and talked about installing the tide gate. Guests staying at Irish Grove suggested that professional cleaners should clean the house, and that the directions to the house could be improved. Brent will look into having an annual spring cleaning of the house by professionals and changing the directions on the MOS web site. Two weeks later five people attended the Carey Run workday. The house was cleaned and preparations done to open for the season.

Atlas: Jane Coskren announced that details are almost finalized with Johns Hopkins to publish the atlas. It was decided to open up the atlas illustrations to competition. The production is on schedule. Walter Ellison said that Nancy Martin has all but 18 mini-routes claimed. All data should be online by July 4.

MD Birding Trail: Marcia Watson said there are seven people on the committee. Currently they are collecting materials from other sites. Marcia will be calling a committee meeting soon.

Conference: Janet Shields said that the registration forms in most cases took over a month to be delivered to the membership. They were mailed the day before tax day and that seems to have been the problem, but they seem to have all been delivered as of last week. The Sinepuxent Bay trip was cancelled because of logistical difficulties. The Crisfield Boat trip is full and has a waiting list.

Conservation: Maureen Harvey reported that Energy Policy Reform and Revitalization Act of 2007 (HR 2337) Subtitle D needs support; it

President's Corner *(continued from page 1)*

and conservation efforts to other organizations. As the organization matured, a campaign for including conservation as an ABA goal was successful (it took 20 years!). This was met with resistance by some and applauded by others. My understanding is that this triggered an exodus of a number of members who thought that ABA had been hijacked and had lost its way.

At the recent international ABA Conference in Ecuador, it was clear that all that has changed. One of the main themes of the conference was conservation, and ABA presented two substantial checks to conservation projects in Ecuador.

Frankly, I am happy that the people who were behind the conservation campaign and other popular ABA programs prevailed. I am also happy that conservation is, and has always been, a main focus of MOS. I realize this time of year everyone is bombarding you with letters of request for your time and money, and it is hard to pick who is most deserving of your resources. But I am going to do it, too. There are folks who are working hard for MOS who need your help.

As you all know, Maureen Harvey, our Conservation chair, does a fantastic (and time-consuming) job keeping track of what is occurring on the conservation front locally, nationally, and even internationally. With the new listserve she is able to put out the call for action in a timely manner, so we can help make a difference.

The Atlas is in the final stretch (something about not being through until the paperwork is done?) and still needs your financial assistance. Right now, Walter Ellison is working hard to finish the data reduction and write the species accounts for the final publication. This document, along with the previous atlas, will provide a valuable foundation for future conservation efforts in the state of Maryland.

And if everyone in the MOS organization gave just \$1 at your club meeting, we could easily meet George DuBois's rainforest challenge (matching \$1,500).

So write that letter to your local, state, or national official. Give to the Atlas fund. Put a dollar in the rainforest bucket at your next chapter meeting. Give a little time and a little money, not just for your birding pleasure, but for the birds themselves.

BOARD MINUTES (continued from page 3)

authorizes USFWS regulation of the wind industry to provide wildlife protection. The Farm Bill of 2007 needs to better support conservation practices. MOS has signed on to several letters on Federal issues, including two from American Bird Conservancy. Maureen received an e-mail from a UMBC student seeking information while doing bird collision studies in Baltimore, which made her think about MOS involvement. She stated that Chicago and Toronto both have programs to help reduce bird and building strikes during migration and suggests that Columbia or Baltimore might be good places to start the program in Maryland. Maureen is looking for someone interested in exploring this for MOS. Partners in Flight has been involved in banding site training and needs financial support for these efforts in South America. There will be more detailed information in the next *Yellowthroat*.

Investments: Because this is the end of the fiscal year, Martha Waugh's report shows a summary of performance for 2004, '05, '06, and '07. Our total income for the 2007 fiscal year is \$89,081. The portfolio value for the same period is \$1,671,969.

Membership: Sarel Cousins told the board that she is up to date, having sent out new-member packets to all the appropriate people.

Scholarships: Tom Strikwerda said the scholarship process went smoothly this year. Fifteen scholarships were awarded; 13 are going to the workshop in Maine, one is going to Minnesota, and one has had to delay her attendance until next summer. Again this year there were few applicants from the Montgomery Co/DC area; Tom is going to try to increase numbers from this area next year.

Statewide Education Activities: Mike Bowen reported that he, Cyndie Loeper, and John Bjerke have been working on the Shorebird ID workshop to be given at the MOS Conference. Mike announced that at the 2008 Edgewood conference Michael O'Brien will give a birding by ear workshop on Friday and lead a Saturday morning field trip.

World Series of Birding: Wayne Bell reported that two Maryland teams won. There were four teams out of the Centreville/Queen Anne's County area, including George Radcliffe's group. The Maryland Yellowthroats won again. A group from the Centreville Elementary School, not connected directly with MOS, won in their division. Wayne said the good news is there is now a tremendous influx of youth teams of all ages participating in WSB.

Youth Programs: Wayne Bell gave George Radcliffe's response to Action Items. One concerned having chapters compile information on youth activities for the MOS web site; George thinks this is a good idea and is looking forward to getting as much information as possible. George will also look into the suggestion of conducting a workshop on youth programs, giving some of the ideas that have worked for him.

OLD BUSINESS

Manual of Operations: Paul Zucker, Long-range Planning Committee, said the latest edition of the manual is on the web site. Relative to the Conference Committee, Janet Shields has proposed changes replacing the title Conference Coordinator with simply Conference Chair. Paul read the text provided by Janet. He thinks the language should be entered in the Manual and asked that the Board approve it. It is: *The committee shall consist of an unspecified number of members. It shall study sites for the Annual Meeting of the Society and then submit site recommendations to the Board of Directors for approval. The contract between the conference site facilities and MOS shall be signed by the President and the Conference Chair. The Conference Committee and those individuals designated by the Committee Chair shall make all local arrangements and plan all activities. The Committee Chair will coordinate meeting plans with the president.* The board approved adding this to the Manual of Operations. Short descriptions are still needed for the Membership Committee, Development Committee, Youth

Activities Committee, and Office Assistant. They should be sent to Paul Zucker, paul.zucker@jhuapl.edu. Treasurer Emmalyn Holdridge is frequently asked if MOS will reimburse members for mileage costs. The policy is that, except for very specific cases where it has been ruled otherwise, the answer is no. Emmalyn would like a statement to that effect in the Manual. Marcia Balestri will work with Paul Zucker to draft text setting forth the policy that MOS normally makes no mileage reimbursement for conducting MOS business.

Insurance Waiver: Marcia Balestri sent out the insurance waiver for comment and didn't receive any until today. So Marcia assumes it is all right as is and she will send it out on the listserv and give it to Taylor McLean to put on the MOS web site. She urges members to use it. It is a general waiver adapted from wording given to us by the attorney at Maryland Nonprofit. Marcia has gotten information for the insurance company to reevaluate insurance on the properties at Carey Run and Irish Grove. The insurance company recommended if we are doing activities with children without parents being involved, we should probably have insurance even with waivers. We don't necessarily need insurance year-round but can take it out for individual activities.

Interactive Mapping: This is a web site that has the ability to put our chapters or main organization on their site. Marcia urged chapter presidents to put their chapters on it. It is free. The MOS website will also be put on it.

George DuBois's New Challenge: George DuBois issued a new challenge this year. If MOS raises \$1,500, George will match it for a rain forest project. The details will be in the next *Yellowthroat*.

Bay Day: Wayne Bell reported that on April 21 the Talbot Bird Club participated in the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum's Bay Day. This was St. Michael's first celebration of Earth Day. MOS was represented, with a lot of help from Talbot Bird Club members.

NEW BUSINESS

Checklists: Marcia Balestri has new checklists. Each chapter will receive enough for each of their members at no charge. If you wish to purchase more, John Malcolm can supply them for 50 cents each plus postage and handling.

Exhibitor at BirdFest 2007 on IMBD at the Zoo: MOS was an exhibitor at BirdFest in April. There was a lot of attention with the raffle. A lot of young people came to participate in contests.

Teaming with Wildlife: Marcia Balestri attended a meeting of a group trying to revitalize Teaming with Wildlife. They talked about how to revitalize this group and about legislative activities, both in Maryland and nationally. Anyone interested in participating should contact Marcia.

LaFarge Mining: MOS received a request from LaFarge Mining, which has six gravel-mining operations throughout the state. They would like their properties to become "wildlife-recognized." LaFarge would like us to survey the wildlife for them on the mining sites. Bob Ringler is meeting with officials for LaFarge to see if this is feasible.

Listserve: It is up and running. Howard Lefkowitz is our Listserve manager. It is now open to the full board. It will shortly be open to the general membership.

Yellowbooks: There are about 45 Yellowbooks left. There have been enough set aside to accommodate the new members coming in this fall. The feeling is that the 45 should get us through until the new Yellowbook is ready to be printed.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Russ Kovach is going to be the new MOS Development/Publicity chair. Dave Ziolkowski will be the new Research chair.

ACTION ITEMS (*New at this meeting. Unmarked action items come from a previous meeting.)

- Executive Council to coordinate revisions and additions to MOS Manual of Operations. Board members to submit comments and recommendations for specific changes to President Marcia Balestri, mebalestri@comcast.net.
- *President to work with Paul Zucker to draft text setting forth policy that there is normally no mileage reimbursement for conduct of MOS business. *President also to draft text setting forth responsibilities of position of MOS Office Assistant.
- *President to post approved insurance waiver to MOS listserve and web site.
- *With new MOS listserve in operation, President will send out another announcement, with posting to MDOsprey and *MD Yellowthroat*, encouraging all chapter officers, state directors, and committee chairs to enroll. Chapters are encouraged to announce the listserve in their respective newsletters. Sign up at <http://mailman.listserve.com/listmanager/listinfo/mdbirds>.
- *Chapter members asked to review Manual of Operations now posted to MOS web site and to send comments/corrections to Paul Zucker, paul.zucker@jhuapl.edu. Especially needed are short descriptions of positions and responsibilities for Membership, Development, Office Assistant, and Youth.
- *Baltimore Bird Club to consider partnership with Audubon MD-DC to develop guidelines to reduce migratory bird mortality from collisions with buildings and other structures. Contact: Dave Curson, dcurson@audubon.org.
- *Chapters and their members are urged to contact their federal senators and representatives with regard to the new Farm Bill.
- Chapter Presidents and members are asked to visit the MapMuse website and consider how their

chapters and MOS might best be represented on this public resource.

<http://find.mapmuse.com;>

[http://find.mapmuse.com/interest/birding_clubs;](http://find.mapmuse.com/interest/birding_clubs)

http://find.mapmuse.com/interest/birding_hotspots. Send comments to Wayne Bell, wbell2@washcoll.edu.

- *Details concerning new \$1,500 "rainforest challenge" will be announced in *MD Yellowthroat*.
- *Scholarship Committee (Tom Strikwerda, tstrik@earthlink.net; 301-942-2841) to look into more effective publicity in regions not well represented by 2007 applications.
- *Bob Ringler, ringler1@comcast.net, to report on outcome of meeting with LaFarge Mining Company at next MOS Board meeting.
- Conservation Committee Chair, Maureen.Harvey@jhuapl.edu, to put on MOS listserve information on Partners in Flight banding site opportunities and needs for financial support in South America.
- *Sanctuary Committee (Brent Byers, baypuffin@hotmail.com; 410-686-7294) to look into costs of paying for annual cleaning services at Irish Grove and Carey Run Sanctuaries.
- *Atlas Committee (Jane Coskren, coskren@erols.com; 410-381-7344) to announce photo competition via several venues, including MOS listserve, *MD Yellowthroat*, and the Atlas web page.

President Marcia Balestri adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by
—Janet Shields, Secretary

UPDATES TO THE NORTH AMERICAN TAXONOMY THE 48TH SUPPLEMENT TO THE AOU CHECK-LIST

BY PHIL DAVIS, SECRETARY • MD/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE

The Maryland Ornithological Society follows the American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) in matters of avian taxonomy and classification. Major editions of *The AOU Check-List of North American Birds* are issued approximately every ten years or so. The last major update, the 7th edition, was published in 1998. The major editions are hardcover books that include range, distribution, and other information. Minor updates used to be issued as Supplements to the Check-List every two years; however, supplements are now published annually each July. The latest update, the 48th Supplement, was issued in July 2007. A summary listing of the complete Check-List and the latest supplements can be found here: <http://www.aou.org/checklist/index.php3>. The scope of the AOU Check-List includes Central America, Mexico, the U.S., Canada, and the West Indies.

CHANGES TO THE CURRENT CHECK-LIST

Recent changes that affect Maryland's checklists, as well as those of the lower 48 states, Alaska, and Canada, include the following (changes that do not affect the U.S. or Canada have not been addressed):

Vultures. The vultures (Cathartidae) have been moved back to their original placement, from Ciconiiformes to the beginning of the Falconiformes; however, the AOU still considers their placement in this position to be "uncertain." On local checklists, this places the vultures once again before the Osprey. This recent change is based on further genetic studies showing that the New World vultures are not closely related to the storks.

Ringed Storm-Petrel (*Oceanodroma hornbyi*). This is a new species to the main AOU checklist, having been moved from the Appendix of hypothetical species to the main list based on a photographed sighting off of San Miguel Island, CA in August 2005.

Bean Goose split. Bean Goose (the former *Anser fabalis*) has been split into two new species: Taiga Bean-Goose (*Anser fabalis*) and Tundra Bean-Goose (*Anser serrirostris*). This split is based on morphology (size and proportions, and color), behavior (vocalization and activity patterns), and banding returns that reveal two distinct winter groups that disperse to separate breeding grounds. The Taiga form (formerly *Anser fabalis middendorffi*) is accidental in Alaska in the Pribilof Islands. Accidental sightings at the Iowa-Nebraska border and at Quebec, Nebraska, and Washington State were believed to be of this taxon. The Tundra form is accidental in Alaska in the Aleutians Islands, the Pribilof Islands, and St. Lawrence Island. Two other sightings of the Tundra form were reported from Quebec and the Yukon in Canada. Separation of the two

can be problematic. The Birds of Korea web site comments, "Apart from their deeper, fuller calls, separation of Taiga from Tundra Bean in Korea is based largely on structure (with differences in bill patterning of little value). The biggest Taiga Beans have necks up to 30% longer than the smallest Tundra Beans, while the [Taiga] bills are also more swan-like, long and sloping, typically with a flat lower edge to the lower mandible."

Intermediate Egret (*Mesophoyx intermedia*). This is a new species to the main AOU Check-List, also moved from the Appendix to the main Check-List. This addition is based on a specimen from Buildir Island in the western Aleutians Islands, AK in May 2006. The placement of this new genus is uncertain, but the AOU has placed it immediately after the Great Egret (*Ardea alba*).

Red-footed Falcon (*Falco verpertinus*). This species has been added to the AOU Check-List based on an accidental, well-photographed record from Edgartown, Martha's Vineyard, MA in August 2004. This species will follow the American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) and precede the Merlin (*Falco columbarius*).

Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis*). The AOU has followed a European DNA-based split of this very intricate "large white-headed gull" complex. In summary, the split separates the Caspian Gull (*Larus cachinnans*) from the Yellow-legged Gull (*Larus michahellis* including the *atlantis* subspecies). The birds recorded in our area were previously considered to be a subspecies of the Caspian Gull, but are now elevated to species level, maintaining the same common name, Yellow-legged Gull. This species has been recorded in Quebec, Newfoundland, Maryland, and the District of Columbia.

Kingfishers. The subgenus of two of the U.S. kingfishers has been elevated to genus status. This changes the scientific name of the Ringed Kingfisher to *Magaceryle torquata* and of our local Belted Kingfisher to *Magaceryle alcyon*.

POSSIBLE FUTURE CHANGES

Here is something to watch for as a possible future addition to the checklist from Florida (but before the Common Myna? PCD).

Sacred Ibis (*Threskiornis aethiopicus*). The AOU added this species to its Appendix of Hypotheticals as a future species to watch. The AOU comments, "Feral individuals have been seen in Florida since about 1992, apparently having escaped following Hurricane Andrew. Breeding has been known in the Miami area since shortly before 1992, and that population has grown to about 40 individuals. In

MOS CONFERENCE 2008 EDGEWOOD, HARFORD COUNTY MAY 30–JUNE 1

Our 2008 conference, hosted by the Harford County Bird Club, will take place at the Ramada Conference Center in Edgewood. This is a new location with outstanding birding areas, and many exciting events are already being planned.

Thanks to the efforts of Harford member Russ Kovach, **Bill Thompson**, editor of *Bird Watcher's Digest*, has agreed to be our keynote speaker. Bill will take a humorous look at "The Perils and Pitfalls of Birding."

Mike Bowen has lined up another outstanding workshop. **Michael O'Brien** will conduct a Birding-by-Ear Workshop on Friday and lead a half-day field trip on Saturday. It doesn't get much better than that!

Speaking of field trips, Harford's Dave Webb (porzana@comcast.net) has already started selecting trip locations and matching them up with leaders. Anyone interested in leading a field trip should contact Dave. Locations such as Susquehanna State Park, Swan Harbor Farms, and Harford Glen, with possible forays into Baltimore County and Pennsylvania, should provide an exciting birding experience for us all.

Thank goodness Maryanne Dolan (Maryanne.dolan@gmail.com) and Dale Johnson (ckadj@juno.com) will be providing us with their excellent services again this year. Dale, who coordinates the Artist Exhibit, always welcomes help; please contact her if you are available. Maryanne is, as usual, running the Silent Auction and Raffle. Contact Maryanne if you are willing to donate time or items.

With all of this in the works, there is no doubt we will be having an outstanding Harford County conference. I hope to see you there. As always, you can contact me (janetbill@prodigy.net) with any questions.

—Janet Shields, Chair
Conference Committee

AOU CHECK-LIST (continued from page 6)

2005, two nests were found in the Everglades in mixed-species heron colonies (Herring et al. 2006) and the species seems to be on the way to establishment."

CHANGES NOT MADE

The AOU considered but did not make the following changes because of insufficient or conflicting information:

White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*). This species was not separated from the European Velvet Scoter at this time.

Black Scoter (*Melanitta nigra*). Likewise, this species was not separated from the European Common Scoter at this time.

2007 MARYLAND/DC LOCALITY LISTS

Each year, the MOS compiles and publishes totals from members' state and local bird lists. **Forms for submitting your 2007 locality lists are available on the MOS web site.** You are invited to submit totals for any of the following categories:

STATE/COUNTY CUMULATIVE LISTS

This category is for lifetime species totals identified anywhere in the state of Maryland, in DC, or within any of the 23 Maryland counties. Please submit only totals that exceed 50% of the maximum number for each locality. (The form contains the latest maximums and the 50% thresholds.) If you claim a MD life list in excess of 349 species, you **MUST** list all species added to your MD life list in 2006. If you don't fill in this box, your list will not be entered into the database.

STATE/COUNTY 2007 ANNUAL LISTS

This category is for total species identified for the same localities as above, but just in 2007. These totals may be reported at any threshold.

YARD LIST

This category is for cumulative yard totals and for 2007 totals. You may count any species you have identified while *in* your "yard" (that is, property contiguous to your home). "Flyovers" and other birds identified *from* your yard (even if they were not in your yard) also count.

ALL-COUNTY LIST: This category covers the number of species that you have identified in every one of Maryland's 23 counties. For example, if you have identified a Northern Mockingbird, an American Crow, a Downy Woodpecker, and a Red-tailed Hawk in all 23 counties, your list total would be 4.

TOTAL TICKS: This category is the sum of all your Maryland County lists. The maximum possible is 7,019. We will accept all-time-high submissions at any level greater than or equal to 2,300 (an average of 100 species per county). Total Tick levels for 2007 will be accepted at any level.

ALL-TIME-HIGH ANNUAL LISTS: This category is used to track all-time-high annual lists from the current and previous years. Annual totals for prior years may be submitted. For Maryland, submitted totals should equal or exceed 300 (70% of the maximum possible number). For individual counties, totals submitted from previous years should exceed either 50% of the maximum possible or exceed one of the top totals previously published for that county.

SPECIES PHOTOGRAPHED IN MD: As the name implies, tell us how many bird species you have photographed (recognizably!) in Maryland. There are no lower limits.

Members' totals that have not been updated within the previous five years (2002-2006) will be dropped from the listings (but not from the database).

Please return the form BEFORE January 21, 2008 to: Norm Saunders, 107 Sailors Lane, Cambridge, MD 21613. Questions??? Contact Norm Saunders at marshhawk@verizon.net or 410-228-5066.

We hope that all who have participated will do so again, and that others will join in, especially those from localities that are currently less than well represented. If you have any comments, thoughts, or anecdotes, please include them. If you have any other categories of Maryland bird lists that are appropriate (for example, all-time or 2007 state/county "Big Day" totals), send them in. We'd like to hear from you. And remember, this is for fun!

—Norm Saunders



ALLEGANY/GARRETT

Check out the Sept/Oct issue of the ABA's *Birding for Mikey Lutmerding's* handsome photo of the Loggerhead Kingbird that landed in Key West in March 2007.

ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY

Maine: Five MOS birders (Brent and Mary Byers of Baltimore County and Dotty Mumford, Linda Baker, and Bobbi Reichwein from Anne Arundel) traveled to Maine in June for an 8-day adventure organized by Al Haury, former AA County birder who's now a Maine resident. Leading the trip was Herb Wilson, ornithology and biology professor at Colby College. We traveled to Capisic Pond (orioles, Yellow Warbler, Redstart), then on to Evergreen Cemetery (more warblers), Scarborough WMA (Glossy Ibis, Nelson's and Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrows), and Pine Point (Least, Arctic, Common, and Roseate Terns)—and that was only the first day! Day 2 took us to Kennebunk Plains (Vesper and Savannah Sparrows, Upland Sandpiper), Langholm Farms (Common Eider, Black Scoter, breeding-plumaged Sanderlings), Saco Heath (blooming pitcher plants, Canada Warbler, and fresh moose tracks). Day 3 was the Whale Watch, 18 miles out to sea; highlights included Greater and Sooty Shearwaters, Wilson's Storm-Petrel, and Northern Fulmar, plus Minke and Fin Whales. Day 4 brought Sandhill Crane, Black Tern, Brown Creepers with young, and ended with a delicious dinner at Al and Jane's new home. Day 5 took us to Long Fall Dam Rd (more warblers, Black Flies) and the Orono Bog (Lincoln's Sparrow). A boat trip to Machias Seal Island on Day 6 added Black Guillemot, Common Murre, Atlantic Puffin, and Razorbill. On Day 7 we

went to Cove Beach, hoping for Spruce Grouse and moose, but had to settle for Nashville Warbler. At Quoddy Point SP we were treated to many warblers as well as the elusive Boreal Chickadee, then later crossed to Campobello Island, Canada. All told, we saw or heard 128 species and had a glorious time, even though the moose eluded us. Thanks to Al and Herb for a great trip.

—Bobbi Reichwein

Pat and Juanita Tate saw some great birds while visiting friends in Angel Fire, New Mexico in late July. While sitting on the porch at 10,100 feet, they watched Rufous and Broad-tailed Hummingbirds fight for the feeders; a Calliope Hummingbird even made an appearance. In the surrounding woods, they spotted Williamson's Sapsucker and Red-naped Sapsucker. Several Mountain Bluebirds showed up, along with a dozen Band-tailed Pigeons. They also enjoyed seeing Juniper Titmouse and Mountain Chickadees. A real thrill was the great "bird's-eye view" of the area during a hot air balloon ride at the Angel Fire Balloon Festival.

AABC members John and Marilyn Taylor journeyed to *North Dakota* in June:

Our trip began in prairie pothole country, a vast area characterized by low, rolling hills, interspersed with glacially carved ponds, swales, and marshes. Even the smallest bits of water host many mated pairs of ducks and geese. We began at Arrowwood NWR, where the eerie winnowing of snipe mingled with the bubbling songs of Bobolink; here were Western Grebe, White Pelican, and several pairs of Wilson's Phalarope and Marbled Godwit, along with hundreds of waterfowl, many engaged in courtship flights. Other stops included Chase Lake NWR, site of a nesting colony of 30,000 White Pelicans, and Cross Ranch, a lovely combination of riparian forest and open prairie, with lots of warblers, orioles, and flycatchers.

On the way to Minot, we stopped at several outlooks over the broad Missouri and at Audubon NWR. From Minot, we visited Upper Souris, Clark Salyer, and Lostwood NWRs.

All are very large, worth much more time than we had. Highlights included several colonies of Black Tern, Sharp-tailed Grouse, and the flight songs of Upland Sandpiper and Sprague's Pipit.

Traveling south, we left the prairies and passed through the Killdeer Mountains to the Badlands at Theodore Roosevelt NP. There we spotted a Prairie Falcon and had close views of singing Lazuli Buntings, along with buffalo, pronghorn, and prairie dogs (but no burrowing owls). At Long Lake NWR, we enjoyed water-dancing Western Grebe and a close American Bittern. A stop at Horsehead Lake produced our only Piping Plover. A Ferruginous Hawk here was one of several we noted. Our final total was 126 species.

—John Taylor

CAROLINE COUNTY

Caroline County Bird Club member Gary French of Maryland, DE reports that last summer a crow in his yard tested positive for West Nile Virus. This spring he had an immature cardinal that tested positive.

The Denton Development Corporation, a non-profit community development enterprise committed to redevelopment in the Denton Central Business District, asked the Caroline County Bird Club to assist them with a nature trail project, part of their very exciting Crouse Park-Wharves at Choptank Crossing project. Steve Westre is the club's liaison for this project.

CCBC member and Bucknell student Jessica Vooris is spending a semester in Spain. We don't know how much time she'll have to bird, but you can read about her experience by going to her blog: <http://blogs.bucknell.edu/studyabroad/vooris/>. Jessica is a former student of George Radcliffe.

Finally, CCBC now has a web presence. We invite you to visit at <http://carolinebirdclubmos.blogspot.com>

—Debby Bennett

HARFORD COUNTY

Panama: Dave Ziolkowski and Dennis Kirkwood led 12 fellow Harford Club members to Panama this summer: Jean Kirkwood, Marty Crouse-Farley, Carol Flora, Larry and Jean Fry (Tri County), Tom Gibson, Marjie Heagy, Susan and Bob Hood, Madeline Lovera, Jane Scocca, and Jean Wheeler. We spent 4 nights in the Canal Zone at Canopy Tower. What fun to awaken to the howling Howler Monkeys as part of a raucous dawn chorus. The observation deck atop the tower afforded eye-popping views of canopy species like Green Shrike-Vireo, Blue Dacnis, Green Honeycreeper, Collared Aracari, Keeled-billed Toucan, and Blue Cotinga. Three-toed Sloth and Geoffroy's Tamarin foraged in the trees outside our rooms. The requisite Birdmobile trip to Pipeline Road was outstanding; we lucked into a foraging army ant swarm with its attendant antbirds (Bicolored and Ocellated), tanagers (Gray-headed), and wood-creepers (Cocoa and Black-striped). The next 6 nights we spent at the very birdy Canopy Lodge in El Valle de Anton. Dusky-faced Tanager pecked at our windows and Snowy-bellied Hummingbird, Long-billed Starthroat, and numerous tanager and euphonia species visited the flora and feeders. Trips to high-elevation pastures and cloud forest brought many new species. A couple of favorites were the Rosy Thrush-Tanager and the diminutive Tody Motmot. We also watched as 7 Swallow-tailed Kites floating above us were suddenly joined by a beautiful White Hawk. Altogether we saw or heard over 260 species.

—Jean Wheeler

HOWARD COUNTY

Members of the Howard County Bird Club were treated to views of two special birds, thanks to the alertness of members. Barry Miller and Michelle Stewart spotted a Cattle Egret at Lake Elkhorn on August 29 and quickly got the word out to club listers. On September 6, Bill and Gayle Hill identified a Buff-breasted Sandpiper at Western Regional Park and they, too, alerted the membership. Both birds stayed around for several days, to the delight of many.

In August, Kate and Dick Tufts took a 3-week trip through Maine and into the Canadian Maritimes. One of their target birds, the Atlantic Puffin, was easily spotted from a boat off of Eastern Egg Rock near New Haven, Maine. They later found the endangered Roseate Tern at Cabot Beach on Prince Edward Island. Their most enjoyable birding on PEI was watching a family of Gray Partridge make its way through a potato field, the female softly clucking to the juveniles. Dick and Kate were in their car within five yards of the birds; the camera, of course, was in the trunk.

Jeff Culler and Joe Byrnes enjoyed a 12-day excursion to southeastern Arizona in July. Jeff excitedly reports that he picked up 25 life birds by only the second day of the trip. A Flame-colored tanager in Madera Canyon was a highlight.

—Kate Tufts

MONTGOMERY BIRD CLUB

Gail Mackiernan and Barry Cooper spent 25 days birding Uganda in August and September with a "mixed flock" of friends from the USA, UK, and Australia, among them former MBC member Greg Anderson, now living in Brisbane. Because Uganda bridges the faunal zones of East and Central Africa, it has one of the largest bird lists on the continent. The group visited most of the major game and national parks, recording almost 550 species of birds and many mammals, including Mountain Gorilla and Chimpanzee.

It was a rather rugged trip, with many long walks and drives over poor roads, as well as a few unexpected "adventures," such as a night spent in the rain in Bwindi Impenetrable Forest when the trail back was blocked by an aggressive herd of Forest Elephants. Despite the occasional hardship, they saw many excellent birds such as Shoebill, African Broadbill, Giant (Verreaux's) Eagle-Owl, and Pennant-winged Nightjar, as well as superb scenery—Murchison Falls, Lake Victoria, and the misty Virunga Mountains. Gail will give a talk on their trip at the club's meeting in February.

SOUTHERN MARYLAND

On May 19 several of our members observed one of the mainstays of the Southern Maryland Audubon Society engaging in a pair-bonding display. Robert John (Bob) Boxwell, past President of SMAS, and currently our webmaster and member of the Newsletter and Publications Committee, married Joanne Frances Bona at the Resurrection of Our Lord Church, Philadelphia, PA. Congratulations to the happy couple!

The listing goes on. . . John Hubbell, county listing in southern Maryland Sept 3, called Gwen and me at our home to report that he had just found two Buff-breasted Sandpipers at the Rte 228 (Berry Road) turf farm. Within 15 minutes I was photographing the two birds, species #271 in Charles County and #233 photographed in the county. Thank you, John Hubbell.

—George Jett

TRI-COUNTY

Chris Dominic and Mike Walsh attended the first ABA Conference to be held in South America, in Quito, Ecuador Sept 1-7. ABA partnered with Tropical Birding to handle the logistics; Tropical Birding telephoned each registrant to review their wants, knowledge, experience, intensity, and physical limitations, then placed them in appropriate groups. Chris and Mike spent a week in a bird paradise. Wake-up was usually at 3 AM, with trips departing by 4 AM and returning at 4 PM, in time for a rest before dinner and the programs. Most participants got to see the target birds, Andean Condor, Sword-billed Hummingbird, and Tawny Antpitta. Mike's favorite was the Laughing Falcon; Chris's was the Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, and she was lucky enough to photograph it. The trip had a total of 460 species; Chris and Mike ticked 235. Later this year they will present a program to the club on their trip.

—Carol Broderick

MARYLAND/DC RECORDS COMMITTEE STATUS REPORT AS OF SEPTEMBER 22, 2007

BY PHIL DAVIS, MD/DCRC SECRETARY

The MD/DCRC has reached the following record decisions since the last committee status report was published in *The Maryland Yellowthroat*. This report covers MD/DCRC review packages 108, 111, and 112. MD/DCRC report numbers are in brackets. These records will be addressed in additional detail in a future issue of *Maryland Birdlife*.

New "state" birds include Inca Dove, Anna's Hummingbird, and Tropical Kingbird for Maryland, and Cackling Goose and Bullock's Oriole for the District of Columbia. Also, "European" Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus phaeopus*) is a new subspecies for Maryland.

More information on the MD/DCRC can be found on the committee's web pages at the following URL:

<http://www.mdbirds.org/mddcrc/rcindex.html>

MD RECORDS ACCEPTED:

"Great White" Heron, *Ardea herodias occidentalis* [MD/2006-066]

Eastern Neck NWR, Kent County
20-Aug-2006 through 24-Oct-2006

"Great White" Heron, *Ardea herodias occidentalis* [MD/2006-117]

Port Republic, Calvert County
17-Sep-2006 through approximately 22-Nov-2006

Ross's Goose, *Chen rossii* [MD/2006-282]

Merkle Wildlife Sanctuary, Prince George's County
13-Dec-2006 through 23-Jan-2007

Cackling Goose, *Branta hutchinsii* [MD/2004-041]

Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County

11-Jan-2002

Cackling Goose, *Branta hutchinsii* [MD/2004-046]

Perryville, Cecil County
23-Jan-2004

Mississippi Kite, *Ictinia mississippiensis* [MD/1998-028]

Point Lookout State Park, Saint Mary's County
17-May-1998

Mississippi Kite, *Ictinia mississippiensis* [MD/2001-063]

Denton, Caroline County
19-Aug-2001

"European" Whimbrel, *Numenius phaeopus phaeopus* [MD/2006-052]

Havre de Grace, Harford County
22-May-2006

Sabine's Gull, *Xema sabini* [MD/2006-118]

Conowingo Dam, Cecil County
24-Sep-2006 through 01-Oct-2006

Inca Dove, *Columbina inca* [MD/2006-267]

Laurel, Prince George's County
05-Nov-2006 through 06-Nov-2006

Anna's Hummingbird, *Calypte anna* [MD/2006-263]

Waldorf, Prince George's County
10-Nov-2004 through 14-Nov-2004

Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus* [MD/2006-284]

Princess Anne, Somerset County
17-Dec-2006 through 03-Jan-2007

MD RECORDS NOT ACCEPTED:

Anhinga, *Anhinga anhinga* [MD/2000-050]

Galesville, Anne Arundel County
08-Oct-2000

Anhinga, *Anhinga anhinga* [MD/2001-086]

Elk Neck State Park, Cecil County
29-Apr-2001

Mississippi Kite, *Ictinia mississippiensis* [MD/1998-029]

Dan's Mountain, Allegany County
17-Jun-1998

Slaty-backed Gull, *Larus schistisagus* [MD/1999-052]

Conowingo Dam, Cecil County
06-Feb-1999 through 21-Feb-1999

Slaty-backed Gull, *Larus schistisagus* [MD/2005-019]

Upper Marlboro, Prince George's County
10-Feb-2005

DC RECORDS ACCEPTED:

Greater White-fronted Goose, *Anser albifrons* [DC/2005-156]

Anacostia
10-Dec-2005 through 22-Dec-2005

Cackling Goose, *Branta hutchinsii* [DC/2007-026]

East Potomac Park
03-Feb-2007

Bullock's Oriole, *Icterus bullockii* [DC/2006-158]

Rock Creek Park
14-Oct-2006

ISO Youth Team Members

The Youth MOS Program is looking for one or two students to fill out our World Series of Birding teams for next spring. The event will be held in Cape May, NJ, on Sat., May 12. Students would need to be able to meet with other team members in advance, attend several spring practice trips, and go up to Cape May several days early in May with the group for scouting. Parents are welcome to attend any part of the program.

MOS fields a high school group that has two returning members and a middle school team with three returning members. The teams will organize during the winter, and a schedule will be given out at that time. High school students should have experience, and middle school students should have enthusiasm and a desire to learn. Chapter members should pass this information on to any interested student, and prospective team members should contact George Radcliffe at radclifg@qacps.k12.md.us. Information on the WSB can be found at: <http://www.njaudubon.org/WSB/>.

Birding with the "Feather Lady"

I wasn't sure what to expect when I signed up for a Saturday "birding trip" to the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History in Washington, DC. But once we met with Carla Dove, the Smithsonian's top expert on feathers and their identification, all my doubts disappeared. She greeted us with a warm smile and obvious enthusiasm for her highly specialized science, then led us into her work space amid a labyrinth of cupboards holding thousands of species of birds.

Under bright lights she had spread out an array of bird specimens on a work table. There, right in front of me, were a pair of Passenger Pigeons, a Carolina Parakeet, and an Ivory-billed Woodpecker. The male Passenger Pigeon was larger and a much richer, more russet color than any dove I'd ever seen. The Ivory-bill was easy to distinguish from the Pileated Woodpecker that lay beside it.

And that was just the beginning. The table was filled with specimens of many birds I'd seen in the field and others I knew only from books. There were Western and Eastern Meadowlarks, and 21 different subspecies of Song Sparrow, all in a single tray; they ranged from the large, dark Alaskan *maxima* race through the pale *saltonis* from Arizona to the *melodia* from the east, and every "flavor" in between.

Like a great chef spreading out a feast for our eyes, Dr. Dove showed us tropical birds with exotic and splendid tail feathers, sea birds of different species that looked almost exactly alike (to illustrate convergent evolution), electron microscope pictures of the tiniest feather shafts that she uses in her identification research, and a breathtaking video of birds striking an Air Force jet fighter from the pilot's view before he had to eject as the plane was crashing.

That research—the military calls them a BASH event, for Bird/Aircraft Strike Hazard—is dramatic and highly valued. Both military and commercial aviation call upon her to collect and interpret data on bird/plane collisions, which can damage or destroy planes when birds get sucked into the engines. Studies of such collisions identify

patterns showing the species, the time of day or year, and the habitats that are most likely to be involved. By avoiding those times and adjusting takeoff directions, some airfields have been able to cut down on crashes. As Dr. Dove observed, her work has saved lives and many millions of dollars in damage.

That was truly interesting, but it was the birds that fascinated us; we were birders, after all. How could we

resist when she asked us to name a favorite bird we'd like to see close up? I chose Hooded Merganser, the handsomest bird I know, and I was thrilled to see the richness of its colors at arm's length. Others asked to see a California Condor beside a Turkey Vulture, which looked very small by contrast.

Perhaps the most awesome sightings, though, were in a special locked area where historic specimens are kept. We saw "Martha," the last living Passenger Pigeon, who died at the Cincinnati zoo almost 90 years ago. There was a Hudsonian Godwit collected and prepared by John James Audubon himself. And another bird from the 1830s, collected by Charles Darwin on his voyage of discovery, the tag on its leg written in his own hand.

We left the building, chattering like finches about the wonders we'd seen. I realized I will never again take a bird trip that would offer such a tally list at the end of the day.

Although Dr. Dove admitted she had had to take family time to guide us on our Saturday tour, she expressed a real interest in meeting similarly with other MOS Chapters in the future. She can be reached at dove@si.edu or 202-633-0801.

—Leo Weigant
Anne Arundel BC



The Birder's Vest



National Geographic Handheld Birds

National Geographic Society, Washington, DC, 2006.
Suggested retail price: \$249.95 (software only) [but discount for Cornell members]; \$449.95 (software plus Palm E2 Tungsten PDA)

It's a simple but brilliant idea: a compact, easily searchable field guide to North American birds complete with playable songs and calls. National Geographic Society has melded expanded text, maps, and plates from its best-selling field guides with a sophisticated program developed by PullUin Software of Vermilion, SD. The result is an excitingly unconventional but practical field guide with built-in search capabilities that a printed guide cannot match. If only this product had existed when I started birding 40 years ago!

To run the software you need a PDA (Personal Digital Assistant) that uses the Palm OS (Operating System) such as the Palm Tungsten E2 (often packaged with the software) or the Palm Treo (with phone and web access packaged by Verizon). Expect to shell out close to \$200—on top of the \$250 for the software. Gulp! Then you need to learn how to use the PDA, which poses small but real challenges for anyone over the age of 15. These can be overcome by assiduously following the detailed instructions provided on a CD that comes along with the PDA.



You must also complete two other tasks before you're ready for wireless birding. First, you must install the NGS Handheld Birds software that comes on a tiny SD (Secure Digital) card that is inserted into the top of the PDA. Second, if you want to use the capabilities of the PDA and the NGS software to the full—and I recommend that you do—you have to install several pro-

grams onto your home computer from the CD provided along with the software SD card. This allows information to be exchanged between the PDA and the computer via a cable linking the PDA to a USB port ("hot synching"). By this stage you may well have decided that it would be awfully useful to have access to a neighborhood "geek."

Get through the installation routines successfully, though, and the fun begins. To launch the program, tap on the Handheld Birds icon on the PDA screen. The home screen offers a list of 867 North American birds, accessible in either taxonomic order or alphabetically by first or last name. (A companion CD contains a very good video tutorial that helped me learn the program's capabilities with a minimum of fuss.) Use the stylus to tap in the first few letters of a bird name on the neat little PDA keyboard, and the list of species narrows. Tapping on a bird name brings up a plate of the bird with major field marks emphasized; there are typically several plates per species. You can also access songs and calls, taken from the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's collection. (The playback volume is not very loud, particularly if you keep the PDA in a protective case. For use in the field, it would be quite feasible to attach a small battery-powered speaker to the headphone jack, so that sound output is amplified enough to use as a pishing tool.) Other menus accessible from the home page of each species provide extensive information on range, breeding, habitat requirements, and the like. The range maps are excellent. The screen is tough to read in bright sunshine, but indoors it provides vibrant colors and good readability.

The available search functions let you narrow the list of species presented to a single state or Canadian province, to a single month, to a single habitat type, or any combination of these variables. In addition, you can specify the colors of a bird or its size range (eg, smaller than a sparrow, crow-sized). For example, you could search for a small red, green, and blue bird seen at a feeder in Florida in December and drill immediately down to a single species—Painted Bunting. Pretty neat, especially for beginning birders.



I am not yet among the growing number of Maryland birders who regularly send checklists of their sightings to eBird, but that could change. Handheld Birds allows you to construct a list of locations you bird regularly and to enter the species and numbers seen on a trip with just a few taps of the stylus. The list of species to choose from can be tailored to fit your location and time of year. I was impressed with how quick and easy the process was. It took me just a few minutes to enter the birds seen on a recent visit to the Blue Mash trail in Montgomery County. The resulting checklist was in the precise format required by eBird. The next time I "hot synched" the PDA to my laptop computer, the checklist was transferred to the laptop, from which I uploaded it to my personal page on the eBird web site. Checklists so transferred are deleted from the PDA to preserve storage space.

This review is not the place to hype the many virtues of a PDA. However, the ability to play audio is very relevant to birders. Our Palm Tungsten E2 came with Real Player

installed. I purchased a 256 megabyte SD card, and using software provided by Palm that I installed on my laptop, I easily transferred a lot of .mp3 files representing songs and calls of birds, "ripped" from my Stokes Eastern Bird Songs CDs. These represent different, and in some cases better, versions of species vocalizations than those in the NGS software.

I'm not sure I buy the National Geographic Society's claim that this product "... will instantly transform your birding outings into vibrant, expertly guided adventures." However, if you can justify the rather steep cost, if you routinely send your checklists to eBirds, and especially if you have other uses for a PDA, Handheld Birds is a useful and fun addition to your birding armamentarium. I anticipate that the prices of both the NGS software and compatible PDAs will come down. Developers are said to be working on new versions of the software that will run on non-Palm devices, including Blackberries and Windows-based units. I expect that "handhelds" that take photos, make phone calls, and surf the Web are pretty soon going to be as ubiquitous and inexpensive as today's cell phones. So wait a few months or a year and you may be able to buy the software and a versatile unit to play it on, both for just a song.

Full disclosure: I didn't purchase this software, and at \$250 I doubt if I ever would have. My wife Joy won it in a raffle at the spring 2007 ABA Conference. It sat around for months, until I decided to bite the bullet and buy a Palm Tungsten E2. As I hope you can tell from this review, I'm glad I did.

—Michael Bowen
Montgomery Bird Club

With thanks to MBC member Chris Wright for helpful comments on a draft of this review

WHICH BIRD FOR HARFORD COUNTY?

Calling All Artists! The 2008 Pin Contest Deadline—January 15—will be here before you know it. The rules are simple: The bird must be appropriate for the conference site (Harford County); it must contain the phrases "MOS" and "2008;" and the artist must be a member of MOS. Put your name, address, chapter affiliation, and the species on the back of each entry. Send entries to John Malcolm, 10205 Kindly Court, Montgomery Village, MD 20886. To see all the rules and more tips about designing pins for the contest, visit the MOS web site, or contact John Malcolm at 301-977-5788 or at smudgie@comcast.

To the Rescue!

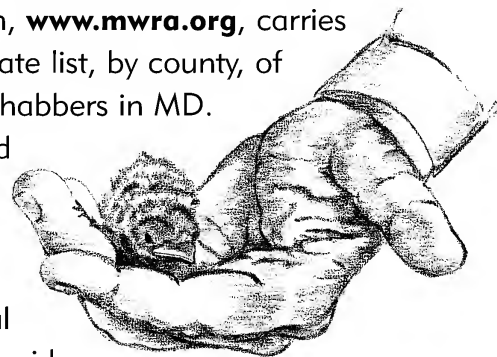
If you come across an injured or baby bird, here are two sources of help. The web site for the Maryland Wildlife Rehabilitators Association, www.mwra.org, carries an up-to-date list, by county, of licensed rehabbers in MD.

The second

link takes you to a PDF of a very helpful chart that guides

you through progressive steps to take if you find a possibly abandoned baby bird:

http://www.nwrawildlife.org/documents/jacobs_birds.pdf.



—Helen Horrocks

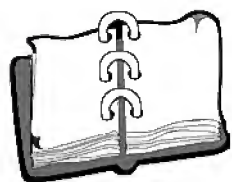
RESEARCH GRANTS AVAILABLE

MOS offers grants, generally less than \$2,000, for ornithological research to be conducted in the state of Maryland. If the work is done at or near one of the MOS sanctuaries, the society may be able to provide accommodations at a nominal cost. Proposals are reviewed twice annually, with deadlines of December 1 and June 1, with award notification in approximately eight weeks. For application guidelines and further information, write or e-mail the Research Committee Chair:

Dave Ziolkowski, Jr.
USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center
12100 Beech Forest Rd, Laurel, MD 20708-4038
dziolkowski@usgs.gov • 301-497-5753

ATLAS PHOTO CONTEST

The Atlas Committee is seeking color photos of Maryland birds to illustrate the upcoming 2002-2006 Atlas of Breeding Birds. **The deadline for submitting your entries is January 31.** Details on the contest are available on the MOS web site.



MOS Calendar

November-December 2007

Thursday, November 1

MEETING. **Frederick.** Local hawk banded *Tom Humphrey* will describe his hawk-banding activities, particularly how he catches so many Cooper's Hawks. 7 PM at the C. Burr Arts Library, Frederick.

Friday, November 2

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *David Brinker* will present "Project Owl-net: Northern Saw-whet Owls." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Hosts: Kathie Lambert and Kim Hudyma.

DINNER MEETING. **Harford.** "Maryland's Himalayas: How Habitats Are Influenced by the Geology of an Area." Speaker: *Dennis Coskren*. Dinner 6:15 PM, meeting 7:15 PM at Churchville Presbyterian Church, Churchville, MD. Contact Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 for add'l info.

Saturday, November 3

ANNUAL BANQUET. **Allegany/Garrett.** Keynote Speakers: *Dr. Guenda Brewer and George Jett*. "Birding in Colombia: It's as Easy as ABC." The program will feature the natural history Gwen and George encountered on a three-week trip to Columbia in Feb 2007. Banquet starts 5:30 PM at the Frostburg United Methodist Church Social Hall, 48 Main St. Please call Charlotte Folk, 301-689-6587, to make reservations. Call Charlotte or Barbara Gaffney, 301-895-4646, for more info. Cost for the dinner is \$13 (students \$10), including tax and gratuities. Please send payment to Charlotte Folk at 179 Mt. Pleasant St, Frostburg, MD 21532.

Carroll. Piney Run Park. Moderate walking around Piney Run Lake for early waterfowl and in mixed forest and along open field

edge for late migrants and winter residents. Meet 8 AM outside the gate to Piney Run Park on Martz Rd. Call Bill Ellis at 443-520-8809 for more info.

Cecil. Avalon Sea Watch. Full day. Meet 7 AM Big Elk Mall, Elkton, at Dunkin' Donuts parking lot area. Leader: Richard Donham, 610-932-0634 (h) or donhamr@zoominternet.net.

Harford. Bombay Hook NWR. For all those early birds who want to catch the migrant-lined shores, join Dave Larkin and Rick Cheicante for a trip to this bird-happy spot. The muddy impoundments, fresh and salt-water marshes, and wave-washed beaches afford great numbers and good views of shore and waterbirds. Bring lunch and meet 7 AM at the MD 155/I-95 P&R. Contact Rick at 410-803-2712 for info.

Howard. Alpha Ridge Park and Landfill. Moderate to difficult walking through the fields looking for lingering sparrows and early winter arrivals. The landfill has the best possibility of hosting rarities. Possibility of walking through tall wet grasses; boots recommended. Meet 8 AM at Alpha Ridge Park. Leader: Ralph Cullison, 410-442-2181. Facilities at the park.

Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and the MARC line. No reservations required. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744, for add'l info.

Saturday-Sunday, November 3-4

Frederick. Town Hill Overnight. We will stay at a local B&B on Saturday and visit the famous (in Maryland, anyway) hawk watch. This time of year is good for

H Indicates Field Trip

Northern Goshawks and Golden Eagles. For info and reservations, contact David Smith, 410-549-7082.

Sunday, November 4

Howard. Centennial Park. 2-3 hours. Easy walking on paved path around Centennial Lake. Woodlands, fields, and water host a wide variety of species. Great view of the sky for flyovers. Early waterfowl and lingering migrants likely. Meet 8 AM at west end parking lot (don't forget daylight saving ends). Leader: Joe Byrnes, 410-730-5329. Facilities available.

Talbot. Ferry Neck Area. Land birds, waterbirds, and waterfowl. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Leaders: Les Coble, 410-820-6165, and Harry Armistead. Breakfast hosts: Priscilla and Paul Thut.

Tuesday, November 6

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. *Gail MacKiernan* will present "Birding In the Land of the Thunder Dragon—Bhutan." Gail, her husband, and three friends traveled to Bhutan in 2005, and Gail will share their birding experiences in slides and video. Doors open at the Sherwood House at 7:30 PM for socializing and snacks; show starts about 7:45 or 8 PM.

Wednesday, November 7

Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). Directions: from I-695 southwest of the city, take I-95 north (exit 11) towards the city. Get off at Exit 55, Hanover St. Turn right (east) on McComas St, left (north) on Key Hwy. Take first left onto Lawrence St and turn left onto Fort Ave, continue through gateway into the park. Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Paul Baicich* describes "Attu—Birding on the Edge." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Karen Mobley, karenm657@comcast.net.

Thursday, November 8

MEETING. Howard. "Rhapsody in Blue—A Celebration of North American Waterbirds," by *Middleton Evans*. Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

MEETING. Talbot. *Kathy O'Malley* will describe the endangered Whooping Crane captive breeding program at Patuxent Research Refuge. 7 PM at William Hill Manor Auditorium, Easton. Info: Cathy Cooper, coopercw@goeaston.net.

H Washington. Greenbrier SP. Greenbrier offers forested mountain trails and a 42-acre lake. Meet 7:30 AM at the Rte 66 P&R for a local half-day trip in search of migrants and waterfowl. Leader: Judy Lilga, 301-432-2276.

Saturday, November 10

H Anne Arundel. Cape Henlopen and Assawoman, DE. A day of birding in several DE spots. Meet at 7 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Contact for the trip is Bobbi Reichwein, 410-798-5940.

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. Waterbirds and landbirds. Possible Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, and Common Loon. Scopes useful. Two-mile level walk. Meet 8 AM. Directions: from I-695, take exit 27/Dulaney Valley Rd north, go several miles, cross large bridge over reservoir, and bear right immediately. Continue to first left, Stone Hill Rd. Go about 100 yards, turn around, and then park on your right. All cars need to park on the same side of the road. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

H Frederick. Northern Saw-whet Owl Banding. This will be a nighttime visit to the banding station on Lamb's Knoll manned by Steve Huy to watch him catch and band migrating Saw-whets. This is a reservations-only trip, limited to 15. Please call Kathy Calvert, 301-698-1298, to reserve your spot and learn the meeting place and time.

H Harford. Eden Mill Nature Center. Enjoy the northwestern part of Harford Co with leaders Jean Wheeler and Carol Flora as we scout the trails of this old mill property. Early winter birds and late-migrating hawks are possible. Meet at the lower parking lot by the picnic pavilion at 7 AM. Call Carol at 410-879-2712 for more info.

H Howard. Howard Waterfowl Search. 8 AM to 2 PM. Visit Columbia lakes and search for gulls, ducks, grebes, loons, and other water birds. Easy walking. Plan to carpool. Bring lunch and drinks. Scopes helpful. Facilities available. Meet 8 AM at Broken Land Pkwy parking lot at Lake Elkhorn. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-428-7567.

Sunday, November 11

H Howard. Centennial Park. See Nov 4 listing. Leaders: Karen Darcy and Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731. Facilities available.

H Kent. Kent County Waterfowl and More. Half day. Join us for a tour of western Kent Co ponds and fields in search of a diversity of waterfowl. This should be peak time to locate rarer geese among the Canadas and Snows. Meet 7 AM at the Dollar General parking lot (the old A&P, off Philosopher's Terr) in Chestertown. For info, contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

H Montgomery. Blue Mash. Half day. Interesting walk at relatively new and surprisingly birdy site near Olney. Meet 7:30 AM at Zion Rd parking lot. Call leader for directions and reservations. Limit: 10. Leader: Ed Patten, 301-948-5648 or epatten986@comcast.net.

H Talbot. Wye Island for waterfowl, field birds, and waterbirds. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM or meet at Wye Island bridge at 7:30 AM. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651. Breakfast hosts: Margaret and Erney Maher.

Tuesday, November 13

MEETING. Kent. Speaker TBA. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

MEETING. Patuxent. Program TBA. 7:30 PM at the College Park Airport Annex. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744, for add'l info.

Wednesday, November 14

MEETING. Montgomery. "Exquisite Ecuador." Photographer *Bob Mumford* will present images from his recent visits to this South American birding hotspot. With over 1,600 species of birds recorded, Ecuador ranks as one of the most coveted travel locations for naturalists. Bob will show hummingbirds, tanagers, toucanets, trogons, and the elusive Giant Antpitta. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Thursday, November 15

MEETING. Caroline. "Results of the 2002-2006 MD-DC Bird Atlas Project" presented by *Walter Ellison*. 7:30 PM, Caroline Co Public Library, 100 Market St, Denton.

Saturday, November 17

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). See Nov 7 listing for directions. Meet outside the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Baltimore. Blackwater NWR. All-day trip to see ducks and thousands of Canada and Snow Geese. Brown-headed Nuthatch possible. Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl possible in late afternoon. Bring lunch. Meet at Nursery Rd P&R at 7:30 AM or at the Blackwater Visitor Center at 9:30 AM. No reservations necessary. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 15)

H Patuxent. Governor Bridge NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the parking lot for Governor Bridge Park. No reservations required. Park is located on Governor Bridge Rd, approximately 1 mile east of MD 301. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744, for add'l info.

H Talbot. Terrapin Park on Kent Island. Usually a good mix of land and waterbirds. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM or meet at Terrapin Park parking lot at 7:45 AM. Leader: Danny Poet, 410-827-8651.

H Tri-County. Bombay Hook NWR. Waterfowl, sparrows, geese, etc. Meet 7:30 AM in Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art parking lot on S Schumaker Dr on Beaglin Park Dr in Salisbury. Contact leader Betty Pitney, 410-543-1853, for more info. Bring lunch.

Sunday, November 18

H Anne Arundel. Blackwater NWR. Waterfowl and eagles. Meet 8 AM at the Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Bring lunch. Leader: Larry Zoller, 410-987-9354.

H Harford. Harford Waterfowl Tour. Come along and help Colleen Webster distinguish a Canvasback from a Redhead as we survey the resting flocks in Furnace Bay. But to keep us Harford Co-loyal, the tour starts at Tydings Park in Havre de Grace. Scopes helpful but not necessary. Meet 7 AM in the parking lot on the southwest end of Tydings Park, close to the boat ramp. Contact Colleen at 410-942-0867 for more info.

H Howard. Centennial Park. See Nov 4 listing. Leaders: Dave and Maureen Harvey, 410-795-3117. Facilities available.

H Montgomery. Lilypons/New Design Road. Half day. Wintering fieldbirds, targeting Fox and American Tree Sparrows, possibly Sora and American Bittern. Call leader for reservation (required) and more info. Leader: Gail Mackiernan, 301-989-1828.

H Indicates Field Trip

H Talbot. Pickering Creek Audubon Center. Waterfowl, sparrows, and other grassland birds. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Leaders: Karen and Bill Harris, 410-770-8303.

Saturday, November 24

H Cecil. Eagles at Conowingo Dam. Half day. Meet 8 AM at fisherman's lot below dam. Leaders: Sean McCandless, seanmccandless1@comcast.net, and Charley Gant.

H Harford. Blackwater NWR. Day-long trip to a showcase of waterways and open to forested habitats. Leaders Dennis Kirkwood and Randy Robertson will be looking for Canada and Snow Geese, with the newly-split Cackling thrown in for confusion! Other forest, marsh, and buffer inhabitants a good bet. Bring lunch and warm, comfortable clothing. Meet at the MD 155/I-95 P&R at 7 AM. Contact Dennis at 410-692-5905 for more info.

H Patuxent. Blackwater NWR and Southern Dorchester County. Meet 7:30 AM at the Bowie P&R. Call Fred Shaffer for reservations at 410-721-1744.

Sunday, November 25

H Howard. Centennial Park. See Nov 4 listing. Leader: Bonnie Ott, 410-461-3361. Facilities available.

H Montgomery. Occoquan NWR, VA. Three-quarters day. Bring lunch and warm drink. We will look for sparrows and other field birds and early waterfowl. Meet 8 AM at the refuge car park. Reservations required. Leader: Mike Bowen 301-530-5764.

H Talbot. Talbot County Landfill. Sparrows, waterfowl, gulls, and hopefully an oddity or two. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Breakfast host: Patty Allen. Leader: Terry Allen, 410-822-8132.

Monday, November 26

MEETING. **Tri-County.** *Jim Rapp*, Exec Dir of DLITE (Delmarva Low-Impact Tourism Experience) will talk about programs, birding opportunities, and

how areas can be better managed to benefit birders. 7 PM at Asbury Methodist Church, Fox Rm, south entrance, Camden Ave, Salisbury.

Tuesday, November 27

MEETING. **Washington.** *Dave Brinker* from DNR will present "Maryland's Biodiversity: The Wonders of the Free State and How We Go About Biodiversity Conservation." 7:30 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center. Call 301-797-8454 for add'l info.

Saturday, December 1

H Carroll. Liberty Lake. Wintering waterfowl return to Liberty Lake for the night starting in late afternoon. Loons, grebes, and gulls possible. We will bird until dark (sunset 4:44 PM, twilight ends 5:13 PM). Meet 3:30 PM at the end of Oakland Rd in Eldersburg. Directions: From Liberty Rd/Rte 26, take Oakland Mills Rd north about 1 mile. Turn right on Oakland Rd and go 0.75 mile to the end and park. Leader: Bob Ringler, 410-549-6031.

H Cecil. Cecil Waterfowl. Half day. Meet 8 AM at Big Elk Mall, Elkton, at Dunkin' Donuts parking lot area. Leader: Marcia Watson, mwww@udel.edu.

H Frederick. Queen Anne's and Kent Counties. Mike Welch will lead a trip to look for early winter waterfowl and other birds on the other side of the Chesapeake Bay. We will meet at 6:30 AM at the Rte 75 P&R near New Market. Call Mike at 301-874-5828 for info.

H Harford. DE Shore. This full-day adventure visits some of the DE shore's birding mega-hotspots in search of early winter waifs and northern strays. Target birds include Northern Gannet, eiders, Harlequin Duck, Purple Sandpiper, Snowy Owl, Great Cormorant, and Brown-headed Nuthatch. Bring lunch and warm, comfortable clothing. Meet at the MD 155/I-95 P&R at 6 AM. Contact leader Russ Kovach at 443-386-4787 for more info.

H Howard. Blackwater NWR. Full day. We will bird the Choptank River Bridge before going to the refuge. Targeting waterfowl and wintering raptors with the likelihood of Rough-legged Hawk and Short-eared Owl. The spectacle of huge flocks of Snow and Canada Geese worth the trip! Meet 6:30 AM at Rte 32/Broken Land Pkwy P&R north lot. Pack lunch, snacks, and beverages. Scopes useful. Leader: Stan Arnold, 410-428-7567. Facilities at some stops.

H Montgomery. Southern Maryland. Half-day waterfowl trip with Gwen Brewer and George Jett. Locations to be determined based on the waterfowl concentrations. Possible areas include Piscataway and along the Matta-woman Creek. Some walking required. Dress for the weather and bring food and drinks. Scopes useful. Limit: 12. For reservation and directions, contact the co-leaders at gmjett@comcast.net.

H Patuxent. Fran Uhler NA. Meet 7:30 AM at the end of Lemon Bridge Rd off MD 197, just north of Bowie State U and MARC line. No reservations required. Call Fred Shaffer, 410-721-1744, for add'l info.

Sunday, December 2

H Anne Arundel. Fort Smallwood and Weinberg Parks. Wintering waterfowl and landbirds in the north part of the county. Meet at Jones Station P&R at 7 AM for a half-day trip. Leader: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513.

H Baltimore. Loch Raven. Waterbirds and landbirds. Possible Bald Eagle, Eastern Bluebird, Redhead, and Common Loon. Scopes useful. Two-mile level walk. Meet 8 AM. See Nov 10 for directions. Leader: Peter Lev, 410-823-2962 or plev@comcast.net.

H Montgomery. Black Hill RP. Half day. Joint MBC/ANS trip. All are welcome. We'll concentrate on identifying winter waterfowl on the lake while looking for landbirds, too. Short easy walks with car jaunts in between. Area can be windy so dress appropriately. Scopes are helpful. No reservations

required. Meet on the deck behind the Visitor Center at 8 AM. Leader: Jim Green, 301-742-0036.

H Talbot. Blackwater NWR. A wide variety of habitats and birds, including Red-headed Woodpecker, a good mix of puddle ducks, Snow Geese, Tundra Swan, Pine Warbler, and of course Bald Eagles. Depart Easton Acme parking lot at 7 AM. Leader: Gordon Jennings, 410-476-3328.

Tuesday, December 4

MEETING. **Baltimore.** Tuesday Evenings at Cromwell Valley. "Atlantic Seaduck Research Project—Chesapeake Bay to Hudson Bay." The Chesapeake Bay is one of the most important wintering sites for several seaduck species. *Dr. Matthew C. Perry*, from the USGS Patuxent Wildlife Research Center, describes his research on the foraging and migration of Chesapeake Bay scoters and other seaducks. Doors open at the Sherwood House at 7:30 PM for socializing and snacks; show starts about 7:45 or 8 PM.

Wednesday December 5

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). See Nov 7 listing for directions. Meet 8 AM outside the Visitor Center. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

MEETING. **Carroll.** *Dave Harvey* will present "Birding on the Mediterranean Island of Mallorca." 7:30 PM at Senior Center, 125 Stoner Ave, Westminster. Info: Bill Ellis, 443-520-8809.

Thursday, December 6

CHRISTMAS DINNER AND MEETING. **Frederick.** *David Smith* will entertain us with "Birding in South Africa." Location TBD. Please make reservations with Treasurer Nancy Parker (301-663-1909) before Nov 27. Contact Mike Welch at 301-874-5828 for location.

SPRING PLANNING MEETING AND POTLUCK DINNER. **Talbot.** 6 PM. Bring ideas for the spring 2008 season and a covered dish, salad, or dessert. Host: Cathy Cooper, 410-822-3451.

Friday, December 7

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *Dr. Douglas Gill* will present "Grassland Restoration in Maryland." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Hosts: Susan Zevin and Danalee Henkart.

Saturday, December 8

MOS BOARD MEETING. Blackwater NWR. 10 AM. Host: Talbot Co Chapter. Harry Armistead will lead a field trip prior to the meeting. Contact Janet Shields at janetbill@prodigy.net for more info.

H Kent. Waterfowl Count at Eastern Neck NWR. Meet 9 AM at the Tundra Swan Boardwalk at the refuge entrance. Leader: Howard McIntyre. Contact the refuge at 410-639-7056 for more info.

H Harford. Conowingo Eagle Watch. Conowingo is one of the best locations for Mid-Atlantic eagle-watching, as dozens of eagles flock to this hydroelectric fish Cuisinart. Join expert leader Les Eastman, who will help you additionally search out Peregrine Falcons, northern gulls, and possibly Golden Eagle. Scopes are helpful. Meet 8 AM at Fisherman's Park at the bottom (east end) of Shures Landing Rd. Contact Les at 410-734-6969 for more info.

Tuesday, December 11

MEETING. **Kent.** *Cindy Heffley*, Eastern Neck NWR Visitor Services Specialist, will talk about Eastern Neck NWR. 7:30 PM. Wesley Hall, Heron Point, E Campus Ave, Chestertown. For info, contact Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568.

HOLIDAY PARTY. **Patuxent.** 6:30 PM at the Watkins Park Visitor Center. Call Maureen Blades at 301-262-5148 for add'l info.

MOS Calendar (continued from page 17)

Thursday, December 13

MEETING. **Howard.** "On a Clear Day You Can See L.A.—Birding Opportunities near Los Angeles Airports," by *Jeff and Elayne Metter.* Hospitality and club bookstore 7:30 PM; meeting/program 8 PM at Howard Co Rec and Parks, 7210 Oakland Mills Rd, Columbia. Info: Kevin Heffernan, 410-418-8731.

Saturday, December 15

H Anne Arundel. Eastern Neck NWR. Wintering waterfowl. Meet 7 AM at Bay 50 Shopping Center parking lot. Leader: Tom Bradford, 410-987-0674.

H Baltimore. Saturday Monitoring Walks at Fort McHenry. A continuing survey of bird activity at the Fort. See Nov 7 listing for directions. Meet 8 AM at the Visitor Center. Automatically cancelled in bad weather. Leader: Jim Peters, 410-429-0966.

H Harford. Loch Raven. This Baltimore Co gem is a fine place to spend an early winter morning searching for newly arrived winter birds and resilient water residents. Meet leader Don Soubie at 8:30 AM at the Rtes 152/147 P&R. Contact Don at 410-569-2159 for more info.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Allegany County. (SEE PAGE 20 FOR DETAILS.)

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Oakland/Garrett.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Baltimore Harbor.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Caroline/Denton.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Triadelphia.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Washington, DC.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Wachapreague.

Sunday, December 16

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Elkton.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Catoctin.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Lower Kent County.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. St. Michaels.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Salisbury.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Nassawadox.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Seneca.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Port Tobacco.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Jug Bay.

Wednesday, December 19

MEETING. **Montgomery.** "Birding Western Australia" by *Don Messersmith,* Montgomery Bird Club. 7:30 PM at Potomac Presbyterian Church, 10301 River Rd, Potomac.

Sunday, December 23

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Point Lookout.

Wednesday, December 26

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Blackwater/Southern Dorchester County.

Thursday, December 27

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Washington County.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Crisfield.

Friday, December 28

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Central Loudoun.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Ocean City.

Saturday, December 29

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Harford/Rock Run.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Chincoteague.

Sunday, December 30

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Annapolis/Gibson Island.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Sugarloaf.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Cape Charles, VA.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Patuxent River.

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Fort Belvoir, VA.

Monday, December 31

CHRISTMAS COUNT. Bowie.

Tuesday, January 1

H Baltimore. Loch Raven Reservoir. Start the New Year birding. Varied habitats including woods, fields, and reservoir. Likely birds are Red-breasted Nuthatch, Bald Eagle, sparrows, thrushes, and waterfowl. Meet 8:30 AM. See Nov 10 listing for directions. Leader: Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or whitemarlin2001@yahoo.com.

H Montgomery. Earliest-Bird Walk: Georgetown Reservoir and DC Hotspots. Half day. Start the New Year right. Meet 8 AM at Georgetown Reservoir, DC, by the gate leading to the dike between the

pools. Reservations required. Limit: 20. Leader: Mike Bowen, 301-530-5764.

Wednesday, January 2

H Baltimore. First Wednesdays at Fort McHenry. Monthly survey of bird activity at the wetland. Scope can be useful. Automatically cancelled in bad weather (rain, sleet, snow, fog, etc). Park in the Visitor Center Parking Lot. Meet 8 AM outside the Visitor Center. See Nov 7 listing for directions. Leader: Mary Chetelat, 410-665-0769.

Thursday, January 3

MEETING. **Frederick.** World traveler and lister extraordinaire *Hank Kaestner* will again entertain us with a new chapter on "Birding Adventure in Kazakhstan." 7 PM at the C. Burr Arts Library, Frederick.

Thursday-Saturday, January 3-5

H Montgomery. Gull Workshop. Meet 7:30 PM at Cyndie Loeper's house for light fare and a gull slide presentation by *Clive Harris.* Then join Clive for the associated local area field trip on Sat. All are welcome for either or both sessions. Call Cyndie for directions, field trip details, and required reservations: 301-530-8226.

Friday, January 4

MEETING. **Anne Arundel.** *Doug Forsell* will present "Winter Waterbirds in the Chesapeake." 8 PM at Arlington Echo Outdoor Education Center, 975 Indian Landing Rd, Millersville. Hosts: Juanita Tate and Bobbi Reichwein.

Saturday, January 5

ANNUAL HOLIDAY PARTY. **Carroll.** Once again hosted by Splinter and Sue Yingling. If you've never attended before, now's the time to start. Everyone has a good time. 7:30 PM until ? For more info and to coordinate your potluck dish, contact Sue Yingling at 410-876-8211 or syingling@mac.com.

H Indicates Field Trip

H Kent. Eastern Neck NWR. Kick off your birding year with a half-day trip for waterfowl and winter land-birds. Meet 8 AM at the Dollar General parking lot (the old A&P, off Philosopher's Terr) in Chestertown. For info, contact Walter Ellison and Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568 or rossgull@baybroadband.net.

Sunday, January 6

COVERED DISH DINNER AND LECTURE. **Baltimore.** 7:30 PM at BYKOTA Center in Towson (formerly Towson ES). Annual potluck dinner. Guest speaker *Hank Kaestner*, birder and world traveler extraordinaire, will share his latest foreign adventures in a slide presentation entitled "Exotic Birding Locales in Asia: Yemen and Kazakhstan." High adventure and unusual birds! For reservations and food coordination, contact Kevin Graff, 410-557-2456 or WhiteMarlin2001@yahoo.com.

❁ AUDREY CARROLL MID-WINTER COUNT. **Frederick.** Meet at the sanctuary at 6:30 AM. Dress warmly and wear waterproof boots. Call David Smith at 410-549-7082 for further info.

MAKING THE MOST OF THE MOS WEB SITE

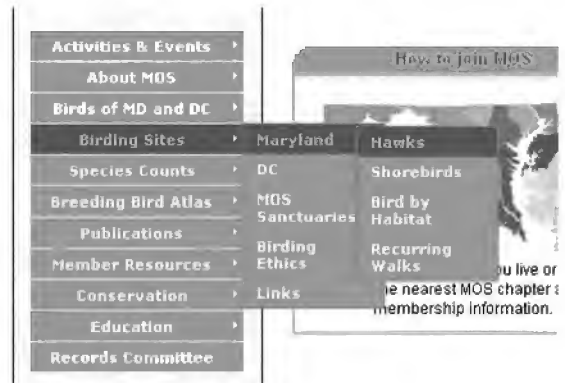
BY TAYLOR MCLEAN, WEBMASTER

The MOS web site, which Fran Saunders spent many, many hours putting together over the past many years, and which I now manage, contains a lot of great and informative sections. The web address is <http://www.mdbirds.org>. If you are not familiar with entering this web address on your computer and would like further guidance, you may contact me at taylormcl@comcast.net, and I will be happy to assist you.

A good way to make your way around the site is the navigation, or main, menu. The navigation menu is located at the top left-hand side of the home page (and indeed on most of the other MOS web pages).

For example, to access the section of the MOS site that covers the hawk-watching counts at Fort Smallwood (where for decades Sue Ricciardi has diligently compiled the records), start at the main menu. Slide your mouse over the words "Birding Sites" (see figure). When you do this, a slide-out menu will appear, offering several choices. Slide your mouse over the word

Maryland, and another menu suddenly appears. Click on the "Hawks" choice, and a new page comes up. Click on the link to Fort Smallwood, and you will see the Fort Smallwood site, complete with data, photos, a map, and directions.



Clicking on links is another great way to navigate through the MOS site. If you see a phrase that is underlined and has a different color, it is probably a link to another page. The description on the link generally tells you what page you will visit if you click on the link. There must be hundreds of links on the MOS website.

Another good way to navigate is to use the Back Button on your web browser. Located at the top left hand side of your browser, the Back Button returns you to the previous page (or pages).

Let's consider how to get to a couple of more sites. What about seasonal counts, such as the Fall Count? Starting at the main menu, let your mouse hover over "Species Counts" and then over "Fall." Then click on "Fall." You will immediately see a page that shows all the Fall Count compilers. You can e-mail or call on of those compilers to participate in the count.

Next, let's turn to the Records Committee web pages, created by the illustrious Phil Davis. These pages are devoted to the rare and unusual birds in Maryland that all birders covet. When your mouse hovers over "Records Committee" on the main menu, a slide-out page does *not* appear. Accordingly, simply click on the words "Records Committee," and presto, the main page for the Records Committee opens. The Records Committee pages contain dozens of links. I encourage you to click on those links and explore the fascinating places they take you.

Now that you have some techniques for navigating, consider checking out other sections, such as the Breeding Bird Atlas section and the Conservation section. The only real way to learn about the many sections of this very informative and interesting site is to navigate through them.



CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Saturday, December 15

Allegany County. Please join us for the 106th CBC. To participate, call J.B. Churchill at 301-697-1223 or e-mail jchurchi@atlanticbb.net to get an area assignment. Tally will be at the Frostburg United Methodist Church Social Hall, 48 W Main St at 7 PM. Bring a covered dish to share.

Oakland/Garrett. To participate, contact Connie Skipper at connieskipper@hohnet.com or call her at 301-387-5227.

Baltimore Harbor. Birders of all experience levels urged to participate. For area assignment contact compiler: Pete Webb, 410-486-1217 or pete_webb@juno.com.

Caroline/Denton. Coordinator: Steve Westre, 410-479-0338 or swestre26@comcast.net.

Triadelphia. Compilers: Jay and Diane Jones, 301-670-0516 or jayrjones@juno.com. Novice and experienced birders welcome.

Washington, DC. Compiler: Larry Cartwright. Info: Rachel at ANS, 301-652-9188 x10.

Wachapreague, VA. Compilers: Paul and Ann Smith, smith24399@verizon.net.

Sunday, December 16

Salisbury/Tri-County. Take a break from the holiday rush and join this traditional Christmas birding event. Compiler: Sam Dyke, 410-742-5497.

Port Tobacco. Compiler, Gwen Brewer, 301-843-3524 or Glbrewer@comcast.net.

Lower Kent County. Full day of counting, followed by countdown dinner. Contact compiler

Nancy Martin, 410-778-9568, for area assignments or more info.

Elkton. Compiler: Laura Balascio, avocet@udel.edu or 302-456-0914.

Catoctin. Call Mike Welch, 301-874-5828 to participate.

St. Michaels. Compiler: Wayne Bell, wayne.bell@washcoll.edu, Bill Novak, and Frank Lawlor. Potluck dinner at 5:30 PM at Christ Church Parish Hall, St. Michaels. Potluck dinner coordinators: Shirley Bailey, Nancy O'Connor.

Jug Bay. Compiler: Sam Droege, 301-497-5840 (w), 301-390-7759 (h) or sdroege@usgs.gov.

Seneca. Compiler: Mark England, 240-252-4218 (h), 240-375-4500 (m) or markengland@canam-contractors.com.

Nassawadox/Brownsville, VA. 2nd year of a new count in the area between Chincoteague and Cape Charles. Compiler: Harry Armistead, 215-248-4120 or harryarmistead@hotmail.com

Sunday, December 23

Point Lookout. Compiler: Bob Boxwell, 410-394-1300 or 410-610-5124 (m).

Wednesday, December 26

Blackwater/Southern Dorchester County. Compiler: Chan Robbins, crobbs@usgs.gov.

Thursday, December 27

Washington County. Contact county coordinator Dave Weesner, 301-432-7718, to participate in this annual census. Afterwards, tally the day's observations while enjoying dinner with fellow birders. Everyone brings a dish to share. Place settings, drinks, and a main dish meat are provided. Dinner starts around 5 PM at the Mt. Aetna Nature Center.

Crisfield. Compiler: Compiler: Charles Vaughn, 410-742-7221 or essc@comcast.net.

Friday, December 28

Central Loudoun. (This count includes 5 miles along the C&O Canal in MD near White's Ferry). Compiler: Joe Coleman, 540-554-2542 or joecoleman@rcn.com.

Ocean City. Compiler: Jay Sheppard, 301-725-5559 or JMSheppard@aol.com.

Saturday, December 29

Harford/Rock Run. If you are interested in participating, contact Jean Wheeler, 410-879-7424 or jswheeler44@msn.com.

Chincoteague NWR, VA. Compiler: Dick Roberts, 757-336-1799 or bandbird@verizon.net.

Sunday, December 30

Annapolis/Gibson Island. Coordinators: Sue Ricciardi, 410-647-9513 and Hal and Lynn Wierenga, 410-647-7439.

Cape Charles, VA. Compiler: Harry Armistead, 215-248-4120 or harryarmistead@hotmail.com

Sugarloaf. If you can help out, contact Helen Horrocks (Frederick), 301-831-6315, or Janet Millenson (Montgomery), 301-983-9337.

Patuxent River. Compiler: Andy Brown, 410-535-5327 or brownaj@co.cal.md.us.

Fort Belvoir, VA. MD area Compiler: Carol Ghebelian, 301-753-6754. VA Compiler: Kurt Gaskill, 703-768-2172 or kurtcapt87@aol.com.

Monday, December 31

Bowie. Contact: Fred Fallon, 301-249-1518 or fwfallon@earthlink.net.

POSTMASTER: TIME-DATED MATERIAL—PLEASE EXPEDITE!

LAST CALL

... for contributing to the **Rainforest Challenge**, deadline December 15. Send your check to Emy Holdridge, 5812 Harness Ct, Columbia, MD 21044.

... for **Research Grants application**, deadline December 1. See page 13.

MARYLAND ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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